

The Patient Experience Post

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Since the mid-1990s, Baird has helped healthcare organizations nationwide improve the patient experience and enhance organizational culture. Baird's culture assessment and diagnosis include experience mapping, medical mystery shopping, and focus groups to reveal the real customer experiences within your organization. Using your patients' experiences, Baird and her team prescribe critical next steps for improving patient satisfaction and HCAHPS scores.

Virtual Visits Demand Good “Webside Manner” – 6 must-haves for a great patient experience

by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

There's little doubt that virtual visits are here to stay, and for good reason. Consumers appreciate the convenience and added level of safety while we navigate the pandemic.

While patients have been thrilled to have the online option, there is no doubt that the bar for their patient experience will continue to rise with time. What was acceptable when virtual visits were a stopgap solution will not be tolerated for long.

There are two major facets to the virtual experience. One is navigating the technology; the other is maintaining the provider/patient relationship. For decades we have worked with providers on bedside manner. It is vital that we set and sustain a high standard for their webside manner as well.

Here are six keys to creating a great patient experience during virtual visits:

- Prepare for the visit prior to the connection – know the reason for the visit.
- Recap something pertinent from the registration information – Example – “I see from your note that you have been having headaches.”
- Maintain eye contact – look at the camera. This sounds obvious, but it is more natural to look at the image on the screen, which may not be aligned with the camera.
- Demonstrate empathy through words and facial expression – Just because you are not in person, doesn't mean you should forgo an expression of caring.
- Validate concerns. This can be as simple as saying, “I can see why that would concern you.”
- Summarize at the close of the session. This means:
 - recapping what you discussed
 - validating next steps, including follow-up appointments
 - soliciting questions by asking, “What questions do you have?”

As with many other customer experiences, with time, what is new becomes standard and expectations increase. The sooner your providers



master their webside manner, the faster you will create positive word of mouth and solidify your presence in the virtual visit world.

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Nurse, author, and consultant Kristin Baird, "Healthcare's Customer Service Guru," is the author of *Raising the Bar on Service Excellence: The Health Care Leader's Guide to Putting Passion into Practice* (Golden Lamp Press, 2008), *Reclaiming the Passion: Stories that Celebrate the Essence of Nursing* (Golden Lamp Press, 2004), and *Customer Service In Healthcare: A Grassroots Approach to Creating a Culture of Service Excellence* (Jossey Bass, 2000). The Baird Group provides consulting, mystery shopping, and training services for improving the patient experience. To learn more, please visit <http://baird-group.com> or call 920-563-4684.